

News from Ed Markey

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PRESIDENT BUSH TO AMERICA'S MILLIONAIRES: I WILL KEEP YOU SAFE FROM KATRINA SACRIFICES

***Medicaid, Educational Program Cuts, Not Taxes, Likely to Pay for
Hurricane Relief Efforts***

Washington, D.C. – Less than one day after President Bush addressed the nation to detail perhaps the country's largest reconstruction effort in history, White House officials 'clarified' that their Katrina recovery program will not interrupt an agenda of robust tax breaks for the wealthiest American families and corporations. Instead President Bush and Congressional Republicans plan to cut \$35 billion in government spending from programs like Medicaid, the health care coverage program for the nation's poor. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee called on the President to ask for the sacrifice of *all* Americans not just America's working families.

"Katrina recovery efforts should not be funded out of spending cuts in Medicaid, education, and veteran's programs, but by repealing tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals and corporations in the country," said Rep. Markey.

"This week the President vowed that the government would provide, "whatever it costs" to rebuild the Gulf region, but it is now clear that the cost of this reconstruction efforts will be borne by poor Americans who depend the most on government housing programs, after school programs and Medicaid that have already been starved by Bush Administration cuts.

"President Bush cannot credibly preach that he will eradicate a 'legacy of poverty' while his Republican allies work to cut \$10 billion from Medicaid, a health program serving the country's poorest families. The President has pledged to cut unnecessary spending, but he has ruled out the option of amending his tax breaks for the rich, which will cost the government trillions of dollars over the next several years.

"The President is using the victims of Katrina as guinea pigs in a conservative policy experiment instead of turning to proven, effective programs of disaster relief," said Markey. "The devastation of the Gulf Coast is a national tragedy but Republicans consider it a golden opportunity to further a radical policy wish list by ignoring environmental laws and fair labor practices while lining the pockets of big government contractors. The needs of the families of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama must drive